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The Director of Central Intelligence  
Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

SP - 173/84  
26 July 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence  
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

THROUGH: Chairman, National Intelligence Council  
Vice Chairman, National Intelligence Council

SUBJECT: Status of Strategic Defense Initiative

1. I represented CIA at the Senior Interagency Group-Defense Policy (SIG-DP) on 25 July to discuss the status of the Strategic Defense Initiative. Lt. General Abrahamson, the head of the SDI program, led the discussion. The meeting was chaired by Deputy Secretary of Defense Taft. Attendees included McFarlane, Beggs, Armacost, Ikle, and others. There were no agenda items for decision.

2. The most important discussion was concerned with the effect on the SDI program of the various ASAT arms control options currently under review by the ASAT IG, in preparation for the potential talks with the Soviets in Vienna in September. It was General Abrahamson's contention that the various ASAT options, either directly or indirectly, would restrict that part of the SDI program concerned with kinetic energy weapon systems, limiting their testing and/or resulting in overwhelming pressure from Congress and others to curtail them because of the real and perceived overlaps with ASAT. (This problem is partly the result of certain testing restrictions in the ABM Treaty. A space-based test against a reentry vehicle is prohibited by the ABM Treaty.) Essentially, any kinetic energy weapon system developed and tested for ballistic missile defense would have clear ASAT capabilities, even if not tested in an ASAT mode as defined by a treaty.

3. I found their presentation fairly convincing, as did the others, including McFarlane. I believe the SDI program office's concern is genuine, although those in OSD who are unhappy about the prospect of ASAT arms control discussions and possible agreements would, in my view, likely encourage this concern as a way of supporting their position on the ASAT issues. I think it would be valuable to have Abrahamson present his views to a number of us at the earliest opportunity, and I will arrange this for the DDCI, C/NIC, and others.

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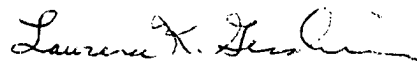
## 4. The issue is potentially explosive:

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--Serious difficulties are perceived in simultaneously presenting this SDI story while pursuing ASAT arms control options that potentially restrict this part of the SDI program, whether those restrictions are real or not, even if the treaty option wording is carefully constructed so as to convince the US government that the SDI program is unaffected. It is clear that opponents of the SDI in Congress, the media, and the public, perhaps some Allies, will use this as a means to pressure SDI and/or question the sincerity of the ASAT arms control effort. Opponents of the arms control effort will point to yet another example of how the arms control process interferes with our national security interests, in this case SDI.

--Nobody at the meeting was enthused about facing these problems in the public debate prior to the November election.

5. A further note: I am disturbed that DoD failed to bring this problem, in its details, to people's attention months ago, so there could have been more time to address it before entering into ASAT discussions with the Soviets. They either did not do their homework, or they know there was a problem but did not raise it for some reason. The general issue has been around for months, but the specific problem regarding the kinetic energy weapons did not surface until July.



Lawrence K. Gershwin

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